

Expelled and At-risk Student Services Grant
Otis District R-3
Grant Narrative

1. Abstract

An “Alternative School” format will help students overcome past personal history, reintegrate into the regular education program, earn a diploma, and access online courses so that college preparation is a reality. Services may be expanded beyond grades 9-12 into junior high where troublesome behaviors and poor choices are first exhibited.

2. Need

In looking at data from 00-01 to 05-06, it is apparent that Otis R-3 serves students for whom expulsion is a potential risk. In that time frame, 53 students have been served by an existing program with only 3 students expelled. 100% of the remaining students were “at-risk” of expulsion due to habitually disruptive behavior, alcohol/drug violations, and truancy. One third of those students would have become drop-outs simply due to the need for credit recovery. Our needs assessment indicates that our suspended and expelled students have great difficulty with interpersonal relationships, with making wise choices, and with demonstrating intelligent behaviors in the classroom. Our strategies will then focus upon high quality instruction that is delivered in an environment that is separate from the regular classroom and the social demands inherent there. Small group instruction will be the norm with not more than 8 students in the Alternative School setting. Academic support in terms of instruction that is consistent with regular education classes will be a priority so that students served can potentially reenter the classroom at the conclusion of the semester or when behavioral indicators make this move possible. Intensive counseling services will be delivered so that the social-emotional needs of our at-risk and expelled students can be addressed. A significant portion of this effort will

involve work with conflict resolution and with making wise personal choices (GREAT Program components.)

A review of the year-end reports for our A+ Program clearly shows that we have been able to institutionalize support processes for students who, through unwise personal choices, are faced with mandatory suspension or expulsion. Indeed, our program has shown exemplary results from the baseline year through our most recent 06-07 school term. Our program rests on a well-designed and consistently implemented method of identifying students who are “at-risk” of suspension or expulsion. This method relies upon data collections for the number of “Q-Card” violations that a student accrues in a given period. An escalating pattern of violations warrants a referral to the After School Club or open library sessions in order to support academic functioning. (It has long been our conviction that academic performance is inextricably linked to classroom and social behavior. Our data bears out this correlation.) If our academic interventions (coupled with parental consultation and a full review of student functioning including social behaviors) fail to mitigate or sharply reduce a pattern of troublesome behaviors, then our Alternative School option is considered. When expulsion is unavoidable, the Alternative School option affords us opportunity to help the student stay “on-track” to graduate while encouraging positive efforts to transition back to the regular classroom. For the baseline year, we successfully supported 38% of participating students in improving academic growth, and in improving attendance. Twenty-eight percent of participants successfully reduced discipline referrals. Only 31% of participants successfully completed the program. In 05-06, 100% of participants successfully completed the program, improved academic growth and reduced discipline referrals while 80% of the participants improved attendance rates. We believe that our rate of success was markedly improved after Year 1 simply because our prevention

processes were fully implemented **before** students were faced with expulsion and multiple suspensions while, for year 1, we served students who had **already experienced a pattern** of suspensions and deeply troublesome behaviors. Across all years of service, disruptive behavior was the most common reason cited for expulsions and for the identification of students who were “at-risk” of expulsion. We served two expelled students in year 1, one expelled student in year 3 and saw no expulsions for remaining years. We believe that our program is successfully supporting students in avoiding expulsion by providing flexible options and alternative programming.

Our program has served 53 students across all years, with only 3 expelled students served. Thus, 94 % of program participants were “at-risk’ of expulsion. Across all years, the most common reason cited for identification of “at-risk’ was disruptive behavior. As mentioned above, students are identified through a carefully designed and consistently applied process whereby early intervention options are exhausted before the alternative school format becomes necessary. At the inception of our program, the District R-3 Board of Education adopted a policy that described identification procedures for students “at-risk of expulsion”, outlined the collaborative efforts necessary to a behavior improvement plan, and identified the contractual nature of the agreement between child/parent and school district should the alternative school option be exercised. This policy revision demonstrates the deep obligation that District R-3 feels to ensure the educational success of ALL students.

Our “at-risk” identification process fully engages parents early in the process and considers parental input in design of the alternative services. In some cases, those services were delivered at remote sites and even within the home. As a consequence of our program, parents express an appreciation for our efforts in working to help students overcome the negative effects of poor

personal choices and past behaviors. Parents and teachers report that troublesome behaviors can be identified as early as grades 7 and 8 (junior high). Hence, counseling services (**for both parent and child**) that target these troublesome behavior patterns could serve as an important preventative measure. Such services could then capitalize upon parent engagement

Data collected for the first four years of program implementation show that 95% of program participants successfully earned a high school diploma. However, data collected does not indicate whether any students served were able to successfully access college level work. The lack of attention to potential college prep courses represents a gap in our services that might be accommodated with online coursework options. Our ultimate purpose is to help at-risk and expelled students overcome past failures and to achieve self-sufficiency as a productive member of society. While the high school diploma is an important goal, our sights must be set higher so that employment opportunities can be broadened for these students.

3. Measurable Outcomes and Objectives

Long term objective:

1. By June 2010, Otis District R-3 will institutionalize a fully operational support system that provides intervention services for students reducing the expulsion rate by 50%.

Annual objectives for each of the four grant years:

1. By June of each year student transcripts will show that 100% of participants are academically involved and moving toward a high school diploma.
2. By June of each year, office referrals will show that we have reduced the number of discipline referrals for students served by 50%.
3. By June of each year, 50% of students served will demonstrate a successful transition to regular classroom instruction or to college prep online courses.
4. By June of each year, 100% of program parents **and** students will receive counseling services as a part of the requirement for program participation.

The above mentioned counseling services will enable parents to fully support adequate progress for program participants toward personal choices that will allow reintegration into the regular classroom environment. (Parents report that they are unable to support school efforts to improve

troublesome behaviors and ineffective learning patterns simply because of lack of information or due to poor relationships with their children). One means of providing immediate communication with parents can be accomplished with the new Infinite Campus student data system implemented by Otis R-3. This system includes a parent portal feature that allows parents to access student information via the Internet. Parents can monitor student attendance, academic performance, and disciplinary events throughout the day. This immediate access to student information allows parents opportunity for timely intervention in the case of truancy, misbehavior, or poor student performance with specific assessments or assignments.

Services for expelled students take priority over services for at risk students. Our intent is to build a system of service delivery options such that resources can be allocated with the level and intensity of need considered. For expelled students, service delivery will necessarily emphasize alternative hours and potentially access through a remote site (in some cases via a computer installed in the student's home). It should be noted here that the very best thing that we can do for expelled students is to prevent them from becoming expelled through reasoned and timely interventions at the point of need.

As noted in the attached letters of support, Superintendent Jeff Durbin and the Re-3 Board of Education are in full support of the program. District resources have been allocated to sustain the existing program which was developed as a result of a prior "Expelled and At-Risk Student Services" Grant. The Board of Education and community are particularly interested in our work and accomplishments since school conflicts often spill over into the larger community. Small communities such as ours are particularly impacted by school unrest and publicly acknowledged student failures.

4. Program Description

When a student is identified as “at risk” of suspension or expulsion, it is with repeated parental contact and only after a remediation procedure has been planned and abandoned. Such a process involves numerous players including teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, counselors, support services personnel, and sometimes parole officers. Placement in our intervention programs involves collaborative planning with parents and students involved. This process clearly identifies the problematic behaviors, the barriers to success, and our planned support for both parent and student. Such clear communication is helpful in establishing clear roles and responsibilities essential to our work. These roles and responsibilities are outlined in both our “Alternative Services Learning Contract” and in our “Alternative Services Behavior Contract”. In the case of students who are working at home, parents are involved in an ongoing and regularly planned relationship with program personnel. In homebound situations, the Otis District provides an appropriate computer, software, and management system. District personnel provide computer set-up and train parents in the use of the management program so that coursework can be monitored, scheduled and evaluated in an ongoing fashion. Parental contact on a weekly basis is essential to the progress that we hope to achieve. Our plan has historically resulted in parental involvement that has brought about a more productive relationship between parent and child and between parent and school district. It should be noted that participation in the Alternative School Program is contingent upon a process involving full disclosure of procedures and policies to all parties and the securing of a signed agreement indicating parental support for the effort. This Alternative School Plan has the full support of several agencies that have agreed to provide support services. These agencies and the personnel involved are listed elsewhere in this narrative and include: Washington County Connections, Washington County

Department of Human Services, Centennial Mental Health, Officers of the State of Colorado 13th Judicial District, Washington County Sheriff's Department, Otis District R-3 Counseling and Guidance Services. Together with District administration and parental involvement, these agencies are committed to academic and personal success for the "at risk" student. (Please see attached letters of support.)

The Alternative School Program is a powerful element in District efforts to provide a safe, civil, and orderly environment for all students. The plan outlines specific procedures that will support expelled and at risk students to more appropriate behavioral choices while at the same time providing for uninterrupted academic progress. The plan also potentially strengthens classroom instruction in the regular education setting since teachers can be free to teach without the negative effects of habitually disruptive students. Appropriate software and supplies have already been secured in order to implement the instructional portion of the plan. We have successfully established District capacity to maintain the basic program since software needs are in place and since little is required in terms of ongoing professional development that is specific to the use of the software and the materials. The identification process and positive behavior supports are in place and fully institutionalized. Because many of these expelled and at risk students are dealing with issues of substance abuse, family dysfunction, and poor interpersonal relationships, supplemental services will be provided by such community resources as the Colorado State Patrol (GREAT Program), Centennial Mental Health (psychological services), and the counseling services provided by the District. Service responsibilities and coordinated services with collaborating partners are already fully institutionalized as a part of normal District functioning and do not impose additional financial obligations.

Because our data show gaps in service with relation to college preparation and with relation to social-emotional needs, we propose to add two elements to our existing structure. We wish to offer access to online coursework for expelled and at risk students and we wish to integrate family-parent counseling into our service plan. These two elements will enable us to help expelled and at risk students achieve a potential transition into higher education and thus, to realize life-long benefits in terms of earning power and occupational options. These two elements will also help expelled and at risk students believe in their own ability to learn and will motivate such students to persist in their work for the sake of future benefits. We want to encourage positive interaction, smart choices and intelligent behaviors such as persistence, precision, personal pride, and a sound work ethic. Such qualities will help to ensure a successful transition into the regular education program and a successful transition into higher education or the workplace.

On the basis of past participation data, we anticipate that we would serve as many as two expelled students and likely 4-6 students who are at-risk of expulsion. Past data shows that expelled students are likely to be 11th or 12th grade students and those at risk are relatively evenly divided in grades 9-12. As mentioned previously, expelled and at risk students are likely to be involved with substance abuse, family dysfunction, and poor interpersonal relationships. Data show that past expulsions have been related to disruptive behavior while suspensions are most likely to be the result of truancy, disruptive behavior and alcohol/drug violations. Hours of service, scheduling concerns, issues involving transportation, and actual curriculum are determined on a case-by-case basis. The District has maintained the FTE originally devoted to the program.

Collaboration

Please see attached letters of commitment from key community collaborators. Coordination of services will be managed by the Otis High School Principal who will chair meetings, establish an agenda, and prepare appropriate documentation. The Otis R-3 Counselor will design counseling services for expelled students and parents along with services for participating “at risk” students and parents. Those specific counseling services will be determined on a case-by-case basis and in response to identified need (family dysfunction, substance abuse, truancy, habitual misbehavior, etc.) Counseling services will include instruction relative to positive personal choices and developing healthy relationships. The counselor and principal will solicit support from key agencies, as needed based on specifics of the case. Agencies and key personnel include:

Collaborating Partner	Program and/or Services	Target Population
Otis School District R-3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff Durbin, Superintendent • Jim Anderson, Principal • Marta Wells 	Academic Curriculum	Expelled students Students at risk of expulsion
	Counseling Services	Expelled students and parents Students at risk of expulsion and parents
Washington County Department of Human Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pam McKay • Jeri Speer 	Parent Support Family Counseling	Parents and families
Washington County Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staci Ricker • Patricia Brewster-Willeke 	Family Counseling Personal Counseling	Expelled students and parents Students at risk of expulsion and parents
State of Colorado 13 th Judicial District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marty Greek, Probation Officer 	Probation procedures and compliance	Adjudicated juveniles enrolled in R-3
Washington County Sheriff’s Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lt. Tony Harms 	Program instruction to support wise personal choices	Expelled students Students at risk of expulsion
Centennial Mental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Art Reyes, County Director 	Psychological services Family counseling	Expelled students and parents Students at risk of expulsion and parents

5. Evaluation

Our program processes and outcomes will be proven effective using data from grade reports, attendance reports, graduation rates, and discipline referrals. It is interesting to note that our program has historically shown a positive impact upon total school climate with a 66% reduction in “cue card” violations for the entire student body (grades 9-12) after two years of operation.

Indicators of success will also include:

- A+ Program data regarding student achievement in various core subject areas.
- Data regarding the number of students successfully receiving diplomas (drop out prevention data).
- Classroom teacher reports and data concerning successful reentry into regular education settings.
- Data indicating the total number of expulsions and suspensions.
- Follow-up data including the number of program students who advance to higher education and/or the number of such students who are successfully employed.

Our community is particularly interested in our work since school conflicts and resulting community unrest are often discussed at community meetings and gatherings. Our program activities and accomplishments are shared via the principal’s report at regularly scheduled Otis R-3 Board of Education meetings. Minutes from these meetings are posted in both the high school and elementary buildings for public review.

7. Budgets

We are anticipating that our program will serve 2 expelled students and 4-6 students who are at risk of expulsion. Our budget is structured for \$2250 per participant or \$18,000. Funds will support salaries and benefits for certified staff to work with expelled and at risk students and their parents (\$6500 for years 1, 2, and 3—reduced to \$6000 for year 4). Funds will also be used to purchase Colorado Online coursework for students enrolled in the program (\$8000 for years 1 and 2—reduced to \$7000 for year 3 and \$3000 for year 4). For years 1 and 2, \$3500 will be used to purchase a computer and printer to be used in remote sites in the case of an expulsion. Please

note that as grant funds diminish, the District increases support in order to maintain full service throughout the course of four years.